

Listening to the concerns of working men and women throughout her district, Rep. Debbie Halvorson (IL-11) toured the Merisant plant in Manteno, Wednesday, January 6th, where she answered questions about local economic growth and renewed her focus to bring more jobs to the 11th

Congressional District.

"We have worked hard over the past year to stop our economic free fall and turn our economy around. Companies like Merisant, and places like this plant, will be the engine that drives our economic recovery," said Halvorson. "We must maintain our focus on creating jobs over the next year. We ended 2009 with a 13.6 percent unemployment rate in Kankakee, and we must end 2010 with more of our neighbors holding stable, good-paying jobs. We must never slow down in our pursuit to grow our economy and put people back to work, and I will continue to fight for that as long as I'm in Congress."

Joined by mayors Tim Nugent, of Manteno, and Bruce Adams, of Bradley, Halvorson toured the 110,000 square-foot facility that employs 150, and manufactures artificial sweeteners.

"Working with our community is one of the most important things we do," said John Brown, Merisant's Plant Manager. "It was great to have Congresswoman Halvorson tour our facility in Manteno. Having someone as impactful as she take the time out of her very busy schedule to come visit us was a treat and an honor."

Since coming to Congress last year, Halvorson has maintained a steady focus on bringing jobs back to Illinois through fighting for investment in local infrastructure, green jobs, and small businesses.